

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRETOR 04888 01 OF 02 221251Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----073593 221300Z /42

O P 221140Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2207
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY GABORONE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PRETORIA 4888

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

FROM LOW

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: ALL PARTIES MEETING

1. SUMMARY: THE DEMAND FOR AN ALL PARTIES MEETING IS NOW
BEING OPENLY REFLECTED BY SOME OF THE LEADER OF THE
INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT THEIR
AGREEMENT MAY BE FORTHCOMING SOON, AND A DATE AND PLACE
WILL HAVE TO BE FIXED SHORTLY. IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY
THAT THEY WILL BE WILLING TO GO TO A MEETING AS SOON AS
AUG. 28. SEPT. 11 OR 12 SEEMS LIKE THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE
DATE. GRAHAM
AND I BELIEVE MAURITIUS IS THE MOST LIKELY
LOCATION, THOUGH WE HAVE NOT ABANDONED TRYING FOR LUANGWA
IN ZAMBIA. THE PARTIES ARE A LONG WAY APART IN THEIR
APPROACH TO THE MEETING. WE WILL NEED TO PREPARE
BOTH THE FRONT LINE AND SOUTH AFRICA TO APPLY
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PAGE 02 PRETOR 04888 01 OF 02 221251Z

PRESSURES. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING FOR THE DEPARTMENT'S INFORMATION IS A
SUMMARY OF A SERIES OF OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
WHICH GRAHAM AND I SENT DAVID OWEN ON SATURDAY,
EXPANDED BY SOME OF MY OWN THOUGHTS.

3. IT IS EVIDENT IN SALISBURY THAT A GOVERNMENT DIRECTED CAMPAIGN IS BUILDING FOR ACCEPTANCE OF AN ALL PARTIES MEETING. ON THURSDAY, CHIEF CHIRAU ANNOUNCED HIS SUPPORT FOR THE MEETING. FRIDAY, SMITH MADE A SPEECH IN BULAWAYO SAYING THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IS WILLING TO GO INTO TALKS "ONCE THE VARIOUS PROBLEMS AND APPREHENSIONS WE HAVE ARE CLEARED." BUT ON SUNDAY NIGHT HE INDICATED THEY WOULD NOT RUSH INTO TALKS AND A NUMBER OF MATTERS HAVE TO BE CLARIFIED FIRST. ON SATURDAY THE SHONA CHIEFS ANNOUNCED THEIR SUPPORT FOR CHIRAU'S CALL FOR A MEETING. THE PRESS IS REPORTING THE STATEMENTS OF BISHOP MUZOREWA IN THEIR MOST POSITIVE LIGHT. WITHOUT QUOTING HIM, LOCAL PAPER DESCRIBES A STATEMENT HE MADE ON FRIDAY AS A "DECLARATION OF QUALIFIED APPROVAL." THE ONLY QUOTES, HOWEVER, CONTINUE TO BE NEGATIVE TOWARDS A CONFERENCE. SITHOLE IS QUOTED AS SAYING "CERTAIN CONDITIONS" MUST BE FULFILLED FIRST.

4. THE MATTER WILL BE DISCUSSED AGAIN IN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL SESSION NEXT TUESDAY (AUG. 22). THERE IS A THEORETICAL CHANCE THAT A DECISION COULD BE TAKEN ON THAT OCCASION TO ACCEPT A MEETING FOR THE FOLLOWING WEEK BEGINNING AUG. 28. IT SEEMS MORE LIKELY THAT A FINAL DECISION WILL NOT BE TAKEN AND THAT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE FOR A MEETING WILL BE SEPT. 12 OR LATER IN THE MONTH.
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PAGE 03 PRETOR 04888 01 OF 02 221251Z

5. GRAHAM AND I WILL SEE GAYLARD MONDAY TO IMPRESS ON HIM THE IMPORTANCE OF PROCEEDING AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE. WE WILL POINT OUT THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO KEEP SECRET A DATE AS DISTANT AS SEPT. 12 AND WE WILL SHARE OUR CONCERN OVER HOW LONG WE CAN KEEP UP PATRIOTIC FRONT SUPPORT FOR MEETING. IF, AS SEEMS LIKELY, NO MEETING IS POSSIBLE BEFORE ALMOST MID SEPTEMBER THEN, IN MY VIEW, WE SHOULD CONSIDER A PUBLIC INVITATION WITH SPECIFIC TIME AND PLACE AHEAD OF TIME IN SPITE OF THE PRESSURES WHICH THE PRESS WOULD MOUNT AS THE RESULT. IT SEEMS TO ME IMPORTANT TO GET THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONVENING A MEETING OFF OUR SHOULDERS AND ON TO THE PARTICIPANT. OUR APPARENT INABILITY TO GET THE PARTICIPANTS TOGETHER IS AFFECTING OUR CREDIBILITY AND OUR INFLUENCE IS WANNING. I BELIEVE THE PUBLIC PRESSURES, ONCE A DATE AND PLACE HAVE BEEN FIXED, ARE NOW SO GREAT THAT BOTH SIDES ARE LIKELY TO ACCEPT. AT LEAST I BELIEVE WE SHOULD SUGGEST TO SMITH THROUGH GAYLARD THAT WE MIGHT HAVE TO TAKE SUCH A STEP TO SEE WHAT HIS REACTION IS.

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PAGE 01 PRETOR 04888 02 OF 02 221303Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----073666 221311Z /53

O P 221140Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2208
INFO AMEMBASSY
R S SALAAM PRIORITY 1928
AMMBASSY GABORON PRIORITY 4538
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY 4575
AMMBASSY PORT LOUIS PRIORITY 822
AMMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY 2778

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PRETORIA 4888

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

FROM LOW

6. THE ADVANTAGES OF LUANGWA ARE GREAT AND WE WILL
CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR IT. ITS ISOLATION, CLOSE
PROXIMITY TO THE PARTICIPANTS, AND AVAILABILITY OF THE
FRONT LINE ARGUE STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF IT. OWEN IS
CONSIDERING ASKING KAUNDA TO WRITE A WARM LETTER OF
INVITATION TO THE PARTIES. WHILE WE INITIALLY SAW
ADVANCE IN THAT COURSE, GRAHAM AND I HAVE RECOMMENDED
AGAINST IT, SINCE WE BELIEVE THERE IS LITTLE CHANCE
THAT SITHOLE AND MUZOREWA WOULD ACCEPT THE LOCATION
IN ZAMBIA AND IF KAUNDA FORMALLY INVITES THEM, THE
ISSUE COULD GET ESCALATED TO A POINT OF HONOR WITH THE
FRONT LINE AND PATRIOTIC FRONT. WE THEREFORE
RECOMMENDED THAT SINCE SMITH PROBABLY PREFERS LUANGWA
TO MAURITIUS, WE LET HIM ARGUE FOR IT. IF HE CANNOT
SUCCEED IN CONVINCING MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE, WE SHALL
THEN SWITCH TO MAURITIUS OR SOME OTHER MUTUALLY AGREEABLE
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PAGE 02 PRETOR 04888 02 OF 02 221303Z

LOCATION.

7. IN THE CASE OF A CONFERENCE BEING AGREED ON NEXT TUESDAY, WE WILL NEED TO CONTACT P.F. LEADERS NKOMO AND MUGABE IN LUSAKA AND/OR MAPUTO IMMEDIATELY TO OBTAIN THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF DATE AND LOCATION. WE WILL PROBABLY WANT TO DO THIS THROUGH OUR EMBASSIES THERE.

8. IN SUBSTANCE, THE PARTIES ARE STILL WIDE APART IN ATTITUDE AS WELL AS SPECIFICS. THE PATRIOTIC FRONT SEES ADVANTAGE TO THE PRESENT SITUATION IN WHICH IT GAINS STRENGTH MILITARILY AND ITS INTERNAL RIVALS' POSITION DETERIORATES AS A RESULT OF THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH SMITH IN A LOSING CAUSE. ONLY THE MORE FARSIGHTED AMONG THE PF LEADERS RECOGNIZE THAT ALL SIDES ARE BEGINNING TO LOSE CONTROL OVER THEIR MILITARY UNITS AND PRIVATE ARMIES ARE BUILDING. IF THEY INSIST ON A MILITARY SOLUTION, THE POLITICAL LEADERS OF BOTH PARTIES MAY LOSE OUT TO THEIR MILITARY CHIEFS. SMITH IS FULLY AWARE OF THE DIFFICULT MILITARY AND ECONOMIC SITUATION IN WHICH HE AND HIS SUPPORTERS FIND THEMSELVES. HOWEVER, IT IS NOT IN HIS NATURE TO CONSIDER COMPROMISE. IN HIS FRIDAY SPEECH HE TOOK CRACKS AT THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER AND INDEPENDENCE ARMY CONCEPTS OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS. SMITH WILL GO TO A MEETING TO TRY TO FIND AN ADVANTAGE THROUGH DIVIDING HIS OPPONENTS AND CASTING THEM IN AN UNFAVORABLE PUBLIC LIGHT AS UNREASONABLE AND INTRANSIGENT. HE WILL PROBABLY CONFINE HIMSELF TO CRITICISING OTHERS' PROPOSALS WITHOUT SETTING OUT ANY HIMSELF. IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, HE MAY BE PREPARED TO MAKE SOME CONCESSIONS IN TERMS OF ABANDONING THE '69 CONSTITUTION, MILITARY ARRANGEMENTS AND THE INDEPENDENCE CONSTITUTION, BUT HE WILL PREFER
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PAGE 03 PRETOR 04888 02 OF 02 221303Z

TO BARGAIN WITH CONCESSIONS THAT DO NOT DETRACT FROM THE POSITION OF WHITES IN RHODESIA. IN OTHER WORDS, HE WOULD RATHER GIVE AWAY MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE'S POWER THAN HIS OWN. THEREFORE, HE MAY SEEK PRIVATE ARRANGEMENTS WITH NKOMO (AND MUGABE), ASSURING HIM OF POWER IN THE TRANSITION AND INDEPENDENT PERIOD. SITHOLE AND MUZOREWA KNOW THIS, AND ARE THEREFORE VERY HESITANT TO GO TO A MEETING AT WHICH THEIR INTERESTS ARE LIKELY TO BE SACRIFICED.

9. AS A RESULT, IT WILL BE VERY IMPORTANT TO STRUCTURE THE MEETING IN SUCH A WAY AS TO BE ABLE TO BRING MAXIMUM PRESSURE FROM BOTH FRONT LINE AND THE SOUTH AFRICANS. WE WILL HAVE TO ARRANGE FOR FRONT LINE REPRESENTATIVES TO BE PRESENT IN LUSAKA OR PORT LOUIS. WE SHOULD HAVE

TALKS WITH THE SOUTH AFRICANS AT THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL,
IMPRESSING ON THEM THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS ATTEMPT TO
BRING THE PARTIES TOGETHER AND THE NEED FOR THEM TO
EXERT INFLUENCE ON SMITH TO MAKE SOME MEANINGFUL
CONCESSIONS HIMSELF.
EDMONDSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, POLITICAL SUMMARIES, POLITICAL SITUATION, PLANNING MEETINGS, POLITICAL PARTIES, NEGOTIATIONS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, CAT-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PRETOR04888
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P840150-2228
Format: TEL
From: PRETORIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780837/aaaabevb.tel
Line Count: 230
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: a971635f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, EXDIS
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1660477
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RHODESIA: ALL PARTIES MEETING
TAGS: PDEV, RH
To: STATE SS MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a971635f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014